

# Don't Get Sick from Your Holiday Picnic

**DOVER** – Summer months mean picnics, days at the beach, camping, and road trips. But as temperatures continue to rise, so do your chances of contracting a foodborne illness if you do not properly handle and sanitize your food. The



The Division of Public (DPH) Health Office of Food Protection encourages Delawareans to be mindful of keeping food out in the hot sun too long and knowing the proper procedures for cooking meats and poultry.

Due to a variety of factors, including warmer temperatures, foodborne illnesses increase during the summer. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), one in six Americans are stricken with food poisoning each year and there are 128,000 cases of foodborne illnesses that require hospitalization.

“Washing and sanitizing your hands and the surfaces where you prepare food are just the start of the precautions you should be taking,” said DPH Director Dr. Karyl Rattay. “To properly protect against foodborne illnesses it is also important to separate plates and utensils used for raw and cooked meat, keep raw foods chilled at all times, wash produce before cutting or cooking it, even if you plan to peel them and cook foods to their proper temperatures, among other key steps.”

Stay healthy and safe during warmer months by following these food safety recommendations from DPH:

When bringing food to a picnic or cookout:

- Use an insulated cooler filled with ice or frozen gel packs. Frozen food can also be used as a cold source.
- Foods that need to be kept cold include raw meat, poultry, and seafood; deli and luncheon meats or sandwiches; summer salads (tuna, chicken, egg, pasta, potato or seafood); cut up fruit and vegetables; and perishable dairy products.
- A full cooler will maintain its cold temperature longer than a partially filled one. When using a cooler, keep it out of the direct sun by placing it in the shade or shelter.
- Avoid opening the cooler repeatedly so that your food stays colder longer.

When hosting an outdoor event:

- Before cooking, keep meats and eggs in a container under 40 degrees F, keeping ice for beverages in a separate container.
- Refrigerate cold foods until they're ready to be served, keeping them on ice once they are out in the open.
- Have a food thermometer on hand so you can be sure you are cooking meats to their required temperature.
- Burgers and sausage should be cooked to 160 degrees F; chicken and turkey should be cooked to 165 degrees F; and steaks should be cooked to 145 degrees F with a three-minute rest time.
- Food should not be left out longer than two hours (one hour if the temperature is above 90 degrees F).

"Summer is a perfect time to try new recipes, cook and eat outdoors, and enjoy family time," said Department of Health and Social Services Cabinet Secretary Dr. Kara Odom Walker. "Just remember to be smart and safe with your food preparations. A few precautions can prevent a potentially serious illness."

For more food safety tips, visit:

- The Office of Food Protection:  
<http://dhss.delaware.gov/dph/hsp/foodsafety.html>
- [Foodsafety.gov](http://Foodsafety.gov)
- The Food and Drug Administration:  
<https://www.fda.gov/food/resourcesforyou/consumers/ucm109899.htm>
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/index.html>

*A person who is deaf, hard-of-hearing, deaf-blind or speech-disabled can call the DPH phone number above by using TTY services. Dial 7-1-1 or 800-232-5460 to type your conversation to a relay operator, who reads your conversation to a hearing person at DPH. The relay operator types the hearing person's spoken words back to the TTY user. To learn more about TTY availability in Delaware, visit <http://delawarerelay.com>.*

Delaware Health and Social Services is committed to improving the quality of the lives of Delaware's citizens by promoting health and well-being, fostering self-sufficiency, and protecting vulnerable populations. DPH, a division of DHSS, urges Delawareans to make healthier choices with the 5-2-1 Almost None campaign: eat 5 or more fruits and vegetables each day, have no more than 2 hours of recreational screen time each day (includes TV, computer, gaming), get 1 or more hours of physical activity each day, and drink almost no sugary beverages.